

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of operating a gaming machine, comprising:

providing a gaming machine having a game display for displaying symbols resulting from play of the gaming machine, and a pay-table display for displaying an active pay-table, the active pay-table having symbols that match the symbols displayed in the game display, the pay-table display being configured such that each symbol of the active pay-table has an inactivated state wherein the symbol of the active pay-table is subdued in appearance and an inactivated state wherein that symbol of the active pay-table is clearly visible, the pay-table display being configured to activate symbols on the active pay-table in response to the symbols appearing in the game display;

playing the gaming machine so that symbols appear in the game display;

activating symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols appearing in the game display;

providing a pay-out to a player when a predetermined symbols appear in the game display; and

providing a pay-out to the player when a predetermined symbols on the active pay-table are activated.

2. The method according to claim 1 further including the

step of initializing the pay-table display prior to play of the gaming machine so as to inactivate all symbols of the active pay-table that were previously in the activated state.

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the playing step comprises inputting a wager into the gaming machine.

4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the gaming machine comprises a slot machine having a predetermined number of reels visible in the game display, each reel having a predetermined number of symbols thereon, the step of playing the gaming machine comprising spinning the reels.

5. The method according to claim 4 wherein the slot machine has at least one pay-line on the game display and wherein the results of each play of the gaming machine are based upon the combination of symbols that arrive at the pay-line.

6. The method according to claim 5 wherein the activating step comprises activating symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols arriving at the pay-line.

7. The method according to claim 5 wherein the at least

one pay-line comprises a plurality of pay-lines, and wherein the activating step comprises activating symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols arriving at all of the pay-lines.

8. A gaming machine, comprising:

means for providing symbols for each play of the gaming machine;

a game display for displaying the provided symbols resulting from play of the gaming machine;

means for providing a pay-out to a player when predetermined symbols appear in the game display;

a pay-table display for displaying an active pay-table, the active pay-table having symbols that match the provided symbols displayed in the game display, the pay-table display being configured such that each symbol of the active pay-table has an inactivated state wherein the symbol is subdued in appearance and an inactivated state wherein symbol is clearly visible;

means for activating symbols on the active pay-table in response to the provided symbols appearing in the game display;

means for providing a pay-out to a player when a predetermined symbols appear in the game display; and

means for providing a pay-out to the player when a

predetermined symbols on the active pay-table are activated.

9. The gaming machine according to claim 8 further including means for initializing the pay-table display prior to play of the gaming machine so as to inactivate all symbols of the active pay-table that were previously in the activated state.

10. The gaming machine according to claim 8 further comprising means for inputting a wager into the gaming machine.

11. The gaming machine according to claim 8 wherein the gaming machine comprises a slot machine having a predetermined number of reels visible in the game display, each reel having a predetermined number of symbols thereon, the gaming machine further comprising means for spinning the reels.

12. The gaming machine according to claim 11 wherein the slot machine has at least one pay-line on the game display and wherein the results of each play of the gaming machine are based upon the combination of symbols that arrive at the pay-line.

13. The gaming machine according to claim 12 the activating means comprises means for activating symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols arriving at the pay-line.

14. The gaming machine according to claim 12 wherein the at least one pay-line comprises a plurality of pay-lines, and wherein the activating means comprises means for activating symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols arriving at all of the pay-lines.

15. A method of operating a gaming machine, comprising:

providing a gaming machine having a game display for displaying symbols resulting from normal play of the gaming machine, and a bonus pay-table display for displaying an active pay-table, the active pay-table having symbols that match the symbols displayed in the game display, the pay-table display being configured such that each symbol of the active pay-table has an inactivated state wherein the symbol of the active pay-table is subdued in appearance and an inactivated state wherein that symbol of the active pay-table is clearly visible, the bonus pay-table display being activated when predetermined criteria has been met;

playing the gaming machine so that symbols appear in the game display in accordance with normal play;

providing a pay-out to a player when predetermined symbols appear in the game display;
determining if predetermined criteria has been met;
activating the bonus pay-table so as to activate symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols appearing in the game display if the predetermined criteria has been met; and
thereafter providing a pay-out to the player when predetermined symbols on the active pay-table are activated.

16. The method according to claim 15 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined cumulative amount of money that must be wagered by the player during normal play of the gaming machine.

17. The method according to claim 15 wherein the predetermined criteria is the random generation of a predetermined number.

18. The method according to claim 15 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined amount of elapsed time in which the player engages in normal play of the gaming machine.

19. The method according to claim 15 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined bonus trigger symbol that appears in the game display.

20. A gaming machine, comprising:

a game display for displaying symbols resulting from normal play of the gaming machine;

a bonus pay-table display for displaying an active pay-table, the active pay-table having symbols that match the symbols displayed in the game display, the pay-table display being configured such that each symbol of the active pay-table has an inactivated state wherein the symbol of the active pay-table is subdued in appearance and an inactivated state wherein that symbol of the active pay-table is clearly visible, the bonus pay-table display being activated when predetermined criteria has been met;

means for effecting play of the gaming machine so that symbols appear in the game display in accordance with normal play;

means for providing a pay-out to a player when predetermined symbols appear in the game display;

means for determining if predetermined criteria has been met;

means for activating the bonus pay-table so as to activate symbols on the active pay-table that match the symbols appearing in the game display if the predetermined criteria has been met; and means for providing a pay-out to the player when predetermined symbols on the active pay-table are activated.

21. The gaming machine to claim 20 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined cumulative amount of money that must be wagered by the player during normal play of the gaming machine.

22. The gaming machine to claim 20 wherein the predetermined criteria is the random generation of a predetermined number.

23. The gaming machine to claim 20 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined amount of elapsed time in the player engages in normal play of the gaming machine.

24. The gaming machine to claim 20 wherein the predetermined criteria is a predetermined bonus trigger symbol that appears in the game display.